

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL MISSION AND RELATIONS

156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, NEW YORK

August 10, 1959

To All Missionaries,
Fraternal Workers,
Commission Representatives,
and Commission Members.

Dear Friends,

"The world Church has lost a statesman, all of us a friend." These words, from the message sent to all fields when the news of Dr. Charles T. Leber's death reached our office, have been impressed upon our thinking time and again in recent days. Cables and telegrams from all over the world have echoed the realization that here was one who had made an outstanding contribution to the Christian movement in our day. We shall increasingly miss his driving leadership and his inspiring vision.

We now are able to share with you information which has become available since our first message. Dr. Leber was in attendance at the Eighteenth General Council of World Presbyterian Alliance meetings in Sao Paulo, Brazil, although he was not in good health. On the morning of Thursday, July 30th, he went to the meeting hall and participated in one short personal conference. He then asked Dr. Richard L. Waddell, Commission Representative in Brazil, to take him to the hospital, where he passed away shortly after noon. A cablegram from Dr. Waddell has said that his passing was quiet and peaceful. For this we are grateful.

Funeral services were held on Friday, August 7th, in the Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church in Baltimore. It was in this church that Dr. Leber was raised and members of his family still worship there. Simple but impressive services were in charge of Dr. Peter K. Emmons, a close personal friend and for many years president of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. On August 2nd, a very impressive Memorial Service was held in Sao Paulo. Speakers representing five continents paid tribute to Dr. Leber's contribution to ecumenical mission. A Memorial Service will be held in New York at the time of the Commission meeting, September 28-29.

Dr. Leber always considered himself as one whose responsibility was to assist the Executive Staff and Commission in making decisions and in implementing them. As a result of these administrative processes, the Executives are able to move forward with their assignments. The Commission officers have appointed Dr. Donald Black as Acting General Secretary until the next meeting of the Commission. Dr. John C. Smith will carry the responsibilities of the Europe portfolio, and is now in Brazil carrying on some of the negotiations in which Dr. Leber was engaged.

We share together in the high calling which carries God-given responsibilities. Being inspired by the memory of his leadership and devoted to the responsibilities which we have assumed, we move forward in faith and consecration. We are constantly upheld by a verse which Dr. Leber often quoted, and which became the key message in the "Mark of the Hawk" -- a project to which he gave much of his heart -- "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Sincerely yours,



Davitt S. Bell
Vice-Chairman
for the Commission



Donald Black
for the Staff Council

DB:RR